

the *Economist* is concerned, is exclusively a Montreal question, and that it is only with a view to force trade this way that we have taken the course we have done. But this we positively deny. Montreal must take her chance with the rest of the province, and can only hope for success by putting herself in a position to compete with the cheapest of those who may enter the arena against her. We do consider, indeed, that she possesses great natural advantages, and these advantages we wish to see improved to the utmost. But it is impossible that she can be supported to the prejudice of the rest of the community; and if it should eventually turn out that in the race of competition she finds herself left behind, deeply as we should regret the result, we should not be prepared to oppose it.

We are glad to learn from our Agent that a strong disposition to establish Branch Associations exists, and that in several places steps were about being taken to effect that object. We have more than once referred to the importance of these Branch Associations as a means of making known the views of the inhabitants of all sections of the Province, so that we may go to the Government armed with the unanimous expression of the entire Colony. At the present moment everything else sinks into insignificance when compared with the great question of Free Trade, and not a moment should be lost in demanding from the Ministry—both Imperial and Provincial—the repeal of all restrictive and protective laws. We would urge on the different Boards of Trade and Agricultural Societies particularly, the necessity of acting immediately in this matter, and shall be happy to lend every assistance in our power, either in the way of affording information or otherwise, to enable them to do so with success.

In conclusion, we give a list of the Agents for the *Economist* who have been appointed throughout the province:—

CANADA WEST.

- LONDON.....Mr. Thomas Craig, Bookseller.
- WOODSTOCK.....Mr. James Laycock.
- BRANTFORD.....James Wilkes, Esq.
- HAMILTON.....Messrs Ramsay & McKendrick.
- PORT DOVER.....Mr. Alfred Buckwell.
- TORONTO.....Mr. James F. Westland.
- WHITEY.....Mr. Gavin Burns.
- DARLINGTON.....Mr. Josiah F. Marsh.
- PORT HOPKINSON.....David Smart, Esq.
- BELLEVILLE.....John Ross, Esq.
- COBURG.....Mr. Lewis.
- PETTERBOROUGH.....W. S. Conger, Esq.
- KINGSTON.....Messrs. Ramsay, Armour & Co.
- BROCKVILLE.....Wm. Mathie, Esq.
- PRESBURGH.....W. B. Wells, Esq.
- CORNWALL.....Mr. L. N. Putnam.
- MARTINTOWN.....Mr. John R. Smith.
- WILLIAMSTOWN.....M. John Wright.
- KEMPTVILLE.....Joseph Leeming, Esq.

CANADA EAST.

- ST. JOHNS.....Messrs Mott & Pattee.
- THREE RIVERS.....Mr. Stubbs.
- QUEBEC.....Mr. William Lane.

TORONTO BOARD OF TRADE.

*Draft of Petition of the Toronto Board of Trade to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, on the subjects of the Repeal of the British Navigation Laws so far as regards Canada, and of the Imperial Differential Duties on the Imports of Canada; as approved by the Council, and intended to be submitted for adoption at a General Meeting of the Board.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY:

The Petition of the Toronto Board of Trade most humbly sheweth:

That by the provisions of the Navigation Laws of your Majesty's Kingdom, the carrying trade of the exports and imports of Canada to and from Great Britain and Ireland, or any British possession in Asia, Africa, or America, is confined to British ships; in consequence of which restriction, serious loss and inconvenience are at present imposed upon the inhabitants of this Province.

Your petitioners, having carefully considered the operation of the said Laws upon the commercial and agricultural interests of Canada, feel called on to state, that prior to the alteration in the Corn Laws of your Majesty's kingdom, elected in the last session of parliament, your Majesty's subjects residing in Western Canada did not feel the disadvantages resulting to the colony from the monopoly of the carrying trade conferred on the owners of British ships by the Navigation Laws, as it was found that the prices of their agricultural exports generally equaled those which were observed to obtain in the contiguous sections of the neighbouring States of the Republic of America, for the same products destined for shipment to the British market through the Atlantic seaports of the said States. Your petitioners cannot, however, conceal from your Majesty the fact, that the protection generally supposed to have been enjoyed by the agriculturists of Canada, in consequence of the preference given to their products in the markets of your Majesty's kingdom, by the provisions of the late British Corn Laws, have not been realized by them; the exorbi-

tant freights and heavy rates of insurance paid on shipments from the port of Montreal, added to other disadvantages connected with the navigation of the River St. Lawrence, having been found quite adequate to neutralise the remission of duty intended by your Majesty to operate in their favour.

Your petitioners have, with much pain, frequently had occasion to observe that, when the state of the British markets has been most propitious to the export of Canadian wheat and flour, the combination of a few shipowners, or their agents, has completely blasted all their hopes, and intercepted the boon designed by your Majesty's paternal Government for the benefit of your Majesty's faithful subjects in the interior of the Province—the rates of freight insisted upon having sometimes been as high as 7s. 6d. sterling per barrel of flour, and very frequently averaging 6s. to 6s. sterling; whilst, at the same times, freights have been obtained from the ports of New York in vessels of a superior class as low as 1s. 6d. and seldom higher than 2s.; and insurances at 50 to 80 per cent. less than by the St. Lawrence.

Your petitioners most humbly submit that, during the past months of the present shipping season, the position of the holders of flour and wheat in the ports of Montreal has been most distressing. Large quantities of produce were forwarded to that city from the interior, where it had been purchased during the preceding winter at prices seriously enhanced by the exaggerated reports which reached Canada of the scarcity of bread-stuffs throughout Europe. On arrival, it was found impossible to obtain shipment for it at less than 6s. sterling per barrel. The holders, threatened with insolvency, alike from its shipment or its retention, were reduced to a state of despair; and perceiving most distinctly that the chief cause of their difficulties was to be found in the present Navigation Laws of your Majesty's kingdom, a general feeling of deep dissatisfaction therewith has arisen, and now possesses the entire minds of your Majesty's Canadian subjects, without distinction of class or party. The farmers of Canada now feel convinced that, deprived of that protection formerly extended to their products in your Majesty's kingdom, by means of which the heavy burdens imposed on their trade by the Navigation Laws were neutralised, they must, in the event of these Laws being continued in force, be reduced to a position much inferior to that of the people in the adjacent States of America; and they contemplate with profound mortification their only alternative in the conversion of their export trade into a valuable branch of the resources of their republican neighbours, who will not fail to avail themselves of so opportune a juncture for demonstrating to the people of Canada, by the removal of every obstacle standing in the way of a free egress through their territory, that they possess the means, and have the desire, to advance their interests.

Your petitioners further most humbly submit, that your Majesty's Canadian subjects have incurred a heavy debt in the construction of canals capable of giving passage to vessels of large dimensions, under the expectation that by these improvements of their internal navigation they would not fail to secure to themselves a large share of the carrying trade of the rich agricultural countries bordering on the great lakes of Canada. The repayment of the debt thus incurred is an object from which your petitioners feel convinced, no consideration can ever divert the intentions of the people of Canada; but it is quite manifest that in the event of the export trade of Western Canada and the States adjacent to the lakes being forced out of the waters of the St. Lawrence, the outlay upon the improvements, from Lake Ontario to the ocean will have become a dead weight on the resources and energies of the Province, the trade of the recently flourishing cities of Quebec and Montreal will have disappeared, and the mercantile capital of their enterprising citizens will have been transferred to the commercial emporia of the neighbouring country.

These are evils which your petitioners cannot contemplate with other than the most gloomy apprehensions; but they feel convinced that, in the wise foresight of your Majesty, they may rely with entire confidence for the prompt adoption of every practicable means by which they may be averted.

Your petitioners have further most humbly to submit to your Majesty that the trade of Canada labours under weighty disadvantages resulting from the imposition of protective custom duties under authority of imperial statutes. This class of duties, your petitioners are pleased to observe, by the declarations of your Majesty's advisers, as well of the recently existing administration as of the present, is no longer held to be in harmony with the recognised principles of British commercial legislation; and your petitioners are disposed to believe that a pressure of other more absorbing measures has been the only cause which has prevented your Majesty's Government from proposing to Parliament the repeal of the imperial customs laws authorizing the levying of protective duties, for the purpose of securing to the manufacturers of your Majesty's kingdom a preference in the supply of the Canada market, which they no longer consent to extend to the people of Canada in the supply of the British market. Several of the protective duties referred to are found by your petitioners not only to be burthensome upon the resources of the Province, but also to be totally inoperative in effecting the purpose contemplated in their devisal, as they are levied, in their maximum extent, on some articles of general consumption—as glass,